

## Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 EB-07

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R 181415Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3872

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 0420

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, AG

SUBJECT: ALGERIANS ANNOUNCE NEW MINISTER OF FINANCE

REF: 75 ALGIERS 3216 OCT 29, 1975 (NOTAL)

1. ON FEB 16 GOA ANNOUNCED THAT PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE HAD SIGNED DECREE APPOINTING ALGERIAN NATIONAL BANK (BNA) DIRECTOR ABDELMALEK TEMAN TO REPLACE SMAIL MAHROUG AS FINANCE MINISTER. MAHROUG, WHO HAS BEEN IN OFFICE FIVE YEARS, WAS "CALLED TO OTHER FUNCTIONS". THIS IS FIRST MINISTERIAL CHANGE IN THREE YEARS, EXCLUDING DEATH OF INTERIOR MINISTER MEDEGHRI AND ABOLITION OF MINISTER OF STATE CHERIF BELKACEM'S POSITION.

2. TEMAM WAS SUBJECT OF SHORT BIO HANDBOOK REPORT JAN 11, 1971. FOLLOWING IS BIO DATA TAKEN FROM THAT REPORT AS WELL AS EL MOUDJAHID ARTICLE FEB 17.

3. BORN ALGIERS IN 1920. HE IS MARRIED TO EUROPEAN WOMAN AND HAS SIX CHILDREN. BECAME ACTIVE IN NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT AT EARLY AGE. HELPED TO FOUND FLN ORGAN EL MOUDJAHID IN 1956. ARRESTED FOR NATIONALIST ACTIVITIES 1957 AND SPENT FIVE YEARS IN PRISON. FROM 1963 TO QOYRN WHILE ASSUMING VARIOUS FUNCTIONS IN TAX ADMINISTRATION AND THE POLITICAL SCIENCE INSTITUTE,  
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FUNCTIONED ALSO AS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF PLANNING AND

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. WAS APPOINTED PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR GENERAL OF BANQUE NATIONALE D'ALGERIE. SAID TO BE REASONABLE, SERIOUS, APPROACHABLE, SOFT-SPOKEN, AND SHY. HAS LARGE PORT WINE BIRTHMARK ON FOREHEAD.

4. TEMAM HAS ATTRACTED LITTLE NATIONAL ATTENTION IN HIS TENURE AS HEAD OF BNA. DURING THAT TIME HOWEVER BNA HAS BUILT REPUTATION AS MOST SMOOTHLY FUNCTIONING BANK IN ALGERIA. TEMAM ALSO WAS ON DELEGATION TO BANK/FUND MEETINGS IN WASHINGTON IN AUGUST OF 1975. TEMAM'S ONE RECENT PUBLIC EXPOSURE OF NOTE IN ALGIERS WAS AS AUTHOR OF OPINION COLUMN IN OFFICIAL DAILY EL MOUDJAHID, IN WHICH HE SUPPORTED CREATION OF AN ARAB MONETARY UNIT BASED ON BARREL OF OIL (SEE REFTEL FOR DETAILS.)

5. TEMAM IS DESCRIBED IN PAST AS "INFLUENTIAL AND PRAGMATIC IN ECONOMIC APPROACH". ON OTHER HAND HIS APPROACH FOR EL MOUDJAHID OPINION COLUMN WAS RATHER DOCTRINAIRE THIRD WORLD. IF ARTICLE ACCURATELY REFLECTS HIS PERSONAL VIEWS HE SEEMS TO HAVE IDEOLOGICAL CONVICTIONS WHICH MAY MAKE HIM POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE BUT PRONE TO RADICAL ECONOMIC SOLUTIONS.

6. COMMENT: LACK OF PRECISION REGARDING OTHER FUNCTIONS TO WHICH MAHROUG HAS BEEN CALLED INDICATES THAT HE NOT BEING PROMOTED. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE GUESSING AT THIS POINT AS TO WHY HE HAS BEEN REPLACED. SPECULATION INCLUDES POSSIBILITIES THAT IT IS BECAUSE (A) HE IN DISAGREEMENT WITH GOA POLICIES ON SAHARA AS BEING TOO COSTLY, (B) HE HAS NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN ARRANGING AS MUCH FINANCING AS REGIME NEEDS, (C) LONG-STANDING FEUDS WITH MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND ENERGY ABDESELAM AND FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTEFLIKA HAVE FINALLY TAKEN EFFECT. WE FRANKLY DO NOT KNOW WHETHER ANY OF THESE IS CLOSE TO THE MARK.

7. MAHROUG WAS ONLY CHRISTIAN IN CABINET. A FRIENDLY AND PROGMATIC INDIVIDUAL WITH OLTRHODOX ECONOMIC VIEWS, HE WAS WELL-LIKED BY WESTERN COMMUNITY HERE AND WILL BE MISSED. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER  
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TEMAM CAN DO AS WELL AS HE DID IN DEALING WITH FOREIGN BANKERS. PARKER

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